Native dances like the shaman dance and the "bate-pau" are organized by dance leaders. In economic affairs there is some degree of specialization, owing to the presence of stores, masons, carpenters, and commercial agricultural activities.

The Terena as a people are linked to the non-Indian world, first, by being made a part of the Brazilian State through the activities of the Indian Service and its representatives, the Post managers. Secondly, they are linked to the Catholic and Protestant churches by means of the missionaries active among them. Thirdly, they are economically linked to the fazendas and neighboring towns owing to dependence upon wage work.

The attitude of the local Brazilian toward the Terena is one of tolerant disdain. Like other Indians they are sometimes called "bugres," a term of abuse associated with sodomy and heresy. The Indian, a Brazilian will say, is "a drunkard, a thief, lazy, and unreliable. He works when he feels like it and will leave his job for no reason at all." There is, however, no discrimination on racial grounds; if an Indian is educated and a good worker he is accepted as an equal. The Brazilian treats a Terena as a member of a minority group and points out the social characteristics of this group. A Terena, on the other hand, accepts Brazilians in general as superiors but adds that if he were better educated he could compete with a Brazilian on equal terms. That these attitudes are rather class attitudes than race attitudes is revealed by the statement which a Terena made about the Caduveo, "If the Caduveo would only stop hunting and killing one another and start farming like we do they would be better off." The Terena recognize the fact that the Caduveo were once great warriors and held a superior position. But as they are now poor hunters they are considered as having lower status than the Terena. Status differences between the Indian groups and between the Brazilians and Indians are, therefore, primarily based on economic and social conditions rather than on racial differences.

THE LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH (IPUHICOTI-HIUKÁ)

The Terena recognize that pregnancy is caused by sexual intercourse. A woman becomes aware that she is pregnant when her menses cease and

/126 cont./

*177 369 [371] [829] [464] them, in a general way, nostalgic for the "good times" of life in the aldeas. But for various reasons they remain in the city, raise their children there, or build up their families there. On the other hand, the aldea Terêna, although integrated in the regional economic structure--since they are active in the labor market--, remain more resistant to culture change and more attached to their ethnic origins /etnia/. Segregated in independent aldeas or on reservations, they remain in communities with high "esprit de corps," which make their assimilation unlikely. As we can see, social mobility, combined with /127/ acculturation, makes it possible, under certain circumstances, for the assimilation process to be carried to its ultimate consequences, or, in other words, to be completed.

[361] [186] [571]

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/129/ VIII. The Mechanisms of Assimilation

121 128 In the examination in which we are engaged, with respect to the assimilation process, pointing out two of its most explicative dimensions--acculturation and mobility--, we indicated certain psycho-social mechanisms that operate within it and that seemed basic to us. Our purpose now is to carry forward the analysis, endeavoring to discern the content itself of these mechanisms through a survey of the socio-cultural factors that stimulate and favor assimilation, as well as those that make it difficult or impede it. The former we shall call convergent and the latter divergent.

Convergent Factors

*177 369 [181] 1. The attraction exercised by the city on the Terêna population, as a whole, leads us to regard it as one of the most important factors in the assimilation process, especially when urban life creates prospects of higher remuneration, better recreation, and better education for their children.

/135 cont./

*177 Protestant penetration which made the designation "Christian"
797 too broad. But since /136/ no effective Catholic action was
771 developed parallel to the Protestant action, the "Catholic"
785 [829] Indians continued to identify themselves as such to the neo-
Brazilian population, more out of habit than conviction, thus
● [186] reflecting merely conservatory positions. The Protestant
ideology, on the other hand, ushered in by means of far more
effective techniques--to which we referred in Chapter VI--
ended by galvanizing part of the Terêna population, a minority,
but which came to acquire a far more powerful "group conscious-
ness" or "party consciousness." The mechanisms that operated
in the conversion, or more precisely, in the recruitment of
individuals into the new politico-religious group, were already
examined in the above-mentioned chapter. It should merely
be underscored, regarding the Terêna as a whole and excluding
individual cases, that these mechanisms reflect a tendency of
the group toward change (far greater than the present conserva-
tive mechanisms that operate in the maintenance of the soi-
disant Catholic group), and consequently opening the way to
*177 assimilation. Thus we had, in the activity of the Catholic
797 missions of the last century, (205) an important instrument of

205. The missionaries who came to work more intensively with the Terêna were the Franciscan brothers, who took the place of the Jesuit padres after 1767, the date when the Society of Jesus was expelled. In Chapter IV, we showed the precarious contact that the Terêna had with the sparse neo-Brazilian population and with the missions until the Paraguayan war.